



# UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450  
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/696,638	10/29/2003	Hisashi Kuroshima	17154	5491
23389	7590	01/29/2008	EXAMINER	
SCULLY SCOTT MURPHY & PRESSER, PC			CONLEY, SEAN EVERETT	
400 GARDEN CITY PLAZA				
SUITE 300			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
GARDEN CITY, NY 11530			1797	
			MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
			01/29/2008	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b>	<b>Applicant(s)</b>	
	10/696,638	KUROSHIMA ET AL.	
	<b>Examiner</b>	<b>Art Unit</b>	
	Sean E. Conley	1797	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

#### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
  - If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
  - Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

#### Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 15 January 2008.
- 2a) This action is FINAL.                    2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

#### Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 7-35 is/are pending in the application.
  - 4a) Of the above claim(s) 27-34 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 7-26 and 35 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

#### Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

#### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
  - a) All    b) Some \* c) None of:
    1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
    2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
    3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

#### Attachment(s)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)                     | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)           |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date: _____                                      |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)          | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date: _____   | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                          |

## DETAILED ACTION

### ***Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114***

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on January 15, 2008 has been entered. Claims 7-35 are pending with claims 27-34 being withdrawn from consideration for being directed to a non-elected species.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

3. Claims 7-10, 14-16, 21-23, 25-26 and 35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by O'Hearne (U.S. Patent No. 5,069,273).

Regarding claims 21, 25 and 35, O'Hearne discloses a device comprising: a cooling holding unit (refrigerated compartment (26)) capable of holding and cooling sterilized equipment which has been sterilized by hot steam, the cooling holding unit

having a fan (96) capable of directing an airflow over a predetermined portion of sterilized medical equipment (see figure 4); a drying holding (heated compartment (24)) unit capable of holding and drying the sterilized equipment, and a storage unit (storage compartment (29)) capable holding and storing the sterilized equipment. The cooling unit, drying unit, and storage unit are all contained in a common unit (cabinet (22)) (see figures 1-2; see col. 2, line 43 to col. 67). Furthermore, the cooling holding unit (refrigerated compartment (26)) is capable of being arranged, via wheels (108, 110), near a steam sterilization device for sterilizing medical equipment.

Regarding claims 7-10, 22 and 26, O'Hearne discloses a cooling holding unit (26) comprising containers (trays (102)) that are inserted into racks (100). Furthermore, the trays (102) inserted into racks (100) have sidewalls which are the positioning portions that are capable of generally positioning the sterilized equipment such as endoscopes which are to be held therein (see figure 4; see col. 5, lines 52-59). As shown in figure 4, the trays (102) contain lowered positioning portions formed by the sidewalls and the bottom of the tray, wherein the sterilized equipment such as endoscopes can be held and arranged to fit the shape of the tray.

Regarding claim 23, O'Hearne discloses a drying holding unit (24) which has containers (trays (70)) capable of storing the sterilized equipment (see figure 6; see col. 4, lines 65-68).

Regarding claims 14-16, O'Hearne discloses that the storage unit, cooling unit and drying unit are all capable of being opened and closed by means of a door.

Specifically, all compartments (24, 26, and 29) of the cabinet (22) are opened and closed by doors (see figures 1 and 2; see col. 5, lines 30-40; see col. 3, lines 20-30).

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

5. Claims 11-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over O'Hearne.

O'Hearne discloses a cooling section (compartment (24)) having a fan (54) and a plurality of removable trays (70) which contain a plurality of apertures (76) forming a mesh that enable circulation of the cold air around the items contained in the tray (see figure 7; see col. 2, lines 59-64; see col. 4, line 65 to col. 5, line 17). O'Hearne only discloses a single fan and does not explicitly teach the use of a pair of fans. However, in view of the legal precedent established by the prior case law St. Regis Paper Co. V. Bemis Co., Inc. 193 USPQ 8, 11 (7th Cir. 1977) which states that duplication of parts for a multiplied effect has no patentable significance, it would have been well within the purview and obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide another fan on the cooling unit for enhancing the cool air circulation by further including additional fans.

6. Claims 17 and 24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over O'Hearne as applied to claim 21 above, and further in view of Northrop et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,619,768 B1).

O'Hearne disclose a food serving cart having a storage compartment (29) for storing dishes and utensils (see col. 2, lines 67-68). However, O'Hearne fails to explicitly disclose a storage compartment having a storage container or being sectioned into storage areas according to the size of the items being stored.

Northrop et al. disclose a portable storage container for carrying plates, dishes and utensils, wherein the container is sectioned into compartments according to the size of the items being stored (see figure 6). Northrop et al. disclose that such a container solves the problem of the burden that arises when trying to carry or transport a large number of dishes and utensils which are usually grouped together in a variety of bags, containers, or boxes (see col. 1, lines 15-22; see col. 4, lines 15-38).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the invention of O'Hearne and include a storage container in the storage compartment or section the storage area into compartments according to the size of the items being stored as exemplified by Northrop et al. in order to organize and more easily transport the dishes and utensils.

7. Claims 18-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over O'Hearne as applied to claim 22 above, and further in view of Jacobs (U.S. Patent No. 3,914,957).

O'Hearne discloses the claimed invention except for a cooling unit (refrigeration section) having containers capable of storing sterilized equipment which comprise detachable cooling members having cooling means wherein the cooling members are lids for covering the containers.

Jacobs discloses a fast cooling liquid dispensing container for use in a refrigerator (see col. 1, lines 4-10). The cooling liquid dispensing container is a container (38) that includes a lid (40), wherein the lid (40) has a tunnel or passage (68)

so that the container receives the cool air from the evaporator of the refrigeration system (see figures 1-2; see col. 3, lines 17-52). Thus the passage (68) in the lid is the cooling means for providing fast cooling to the items stored in the container (38). The container (38) is capable of storing sterilized equipment.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the cooling unit of O'Hearne and include containers having cooling members that are lids as exemplified by Jacobs in order to provide fast cooling of the items stored in the containers.

#### ***Response to Arguments***

8. Applicant's arguments filed January 15, 2008 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

The applicants first argue that the device of O'Hearne does not disclose a device "for sterilizing medical equipment" and that O'Hearne does not disclose a "cooling holding unit having one or more fans positioned to direct an airflow over a predetermined portion of the sterilized equipment". The examiner disagrees. First, the new limitation of "for sterilized medical equipment" still pertains to an intended use of the device. The device of O'Hearne remains capable of being used for holding sterilized medical equipment. Secondly, the cooling holding unit (refrigerated compartment (26)) of O' Hearne has a fan (96) capable of directing an airflow over a predetermined portion of sterilized medical equipment that may be stored in the cooling

unit (see col. 5, lines 30-51; see figure 4 - specifically the arrows indicating direction of air flow from fan (96)).

With regards to the rejection of claim 7-10, 14-16, 21-23, 25, 26 and 35 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b), the applicants further argue that O'Hearne does not teach all of the elements recited in independent claims 21 and 35. The examiner disagrees for the reasons stated in the previous paragraph as well as for the reasons stated in the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) in section 3 above.

Since independent claims 21 and 35 remain rejected, claims 11-13, 17-20 and 24 remain rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as stated in the above rejections of the claims.

Finally, with regards to the rejections of claims 11-13, 17-20 and 24 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the applicants argue that O'Hearne is non-analogous art which is further evidenced by the amendment to the preamble of claims 21 and 35. This argument is not persuasive. A reference may be from an entirely different field of endeavor than that of the claimed invention or may be directed to an entirely different problem from the one addressed by the inventor, yet the reference will still anticipate if it explicitly or inherently discloses every limitation recited in the claims (see *In re Schreiber*). In the instance of claims 21 and 35, O'Hearne explicitly discloses every structural limitation recited in the claims. Thus O'Hearne is not considered non-analogous art since claims 21 and 35 are anticipated by O'Hearne and O'Hearne is fully capable of functioning as a steam sterilization storage device for sterilized medical equipment. In addition, with regards to the rejections of claims 11-13, 17-20 and 24, the prior art reference of

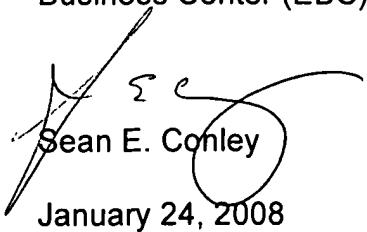
O'Hearne was modified with analogous art (analogous to the O'Hearne reference) from the refrigeration and food storage fields to meet the limitations of these claims.

### ***Conclusion***

9. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Sean E. Conley whose telephone number is 571-272-8414. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:30-5:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Gladys Corcoran can be reached on 571-272-1214. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

  
Sean E. Conley  
January 24, 2008